

A stylized, high-contrast portrait of Karl Marx in shades of blue and white, serving as the background for the book cover. The portrait is composed of geometric shapes, giving it a modern, graphic feel. Marx is depicted with his characteristic thick mustache and a serious expression.

Contemporary World Situation and
**Validity of
Marxism**

A stylized, high-contrast portrait of Madan Bhandari in shades of blue and white, positioned in the bottom left corner of the book cover. The portrait is composed of geometric shapes, giving it a modern, graphic feel. Bhandari is depicted with a mustache and glasses.

Madan Bhandari

Contemporary World Situation — and — **Validity of Marxism**

Madan Bhandari

General Secretary, CPN (UML)

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Paper and Remarks Presented by
People's Leader Madan Bhandari
at the International Seminar of Communist Parties.

Organized by
Communist Party of India (Marxist)
Marking the 175th Birth Anniversary of Karl Marx
held on 5-7 May 1993 in Calcutta, India.
And Preface by Tika Dhakal

Contents

- *Preface*
Interpretation of Marxism in the Calcutta Paper 11
- *Paper*
Contemporary World Situation and
Validity of Marxism 37
- *Remarks at the Discussion*
Response to the Discussions
and Interventions 53





PREFACE

Interpretation of Marxism in the Calcutta Paper

Madan Bhandari, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist and Leninist (CPN-UML), presented this working paper entitled “Contemporary International Situation and Relevance of Marxism” at the international forum of world communist parties held in Calcutta, India in 1993¹. By then, Madan Bhandari had already emerged as an influential political leader because of his contribution to the democratization process of Nepalese society and the communist movement, and more remarkably as the theorist of people’s multiparty democracy (PMD). The historic Calcutta Conference brought the stage for Bhandari to present his creative interpretation of Marxism—i.e., PMD—before an international audience.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI (M)) organized this two-day conference to mark the 175th birth anniversary

1 The Conference was organized at the initiative of CPI (M) from May 5 to 7, 1993 in Calcutta, the capital of West Bengal State of India. It was convened to analyse the reasons behind the displacement of communist rule in the so-called socialist countries of Eastern Europe during 1989-1991, following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, to assist in seeking new ideological departing point of the communist movement and to boost the confidence of communist movements in various countries across the world. The main theme of the Conference was: Relevance of Marxism in Contemporary World.

of Karl Marx and invited representatives of communist parties from thirty countries around the world to discuss “Contemporary World Situation and Validity of Marxism”². Delegates were requested to prepare their submissions on the subject, out of whom twenty-four communist parties sent their working papers while twenty-one of them also made in-person presentations.

The delegates from Nepal³, Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Canada, Cuba, France, Germany, Greece, India (the CPI and the CPI-M), Iran, North Korea, Mexico, the Philippines, Portugal, South Africa, Vietnam, Syria, and the United States submitted their working papers and made presentations. Though the communist parties of Iran, Syria, and the United States could not participate in the Conference, they sent their working papers. The communist parties of China, Cyprus, Italy, Mauritius, Russia, Spain, and Colombia sent their best wishes. Thus, the conference could be credited to have secured representative participation of the world’s communist movement.

Since the conference took place as the first comprehensive conclave of communist parties following the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the fall of communist governments in Eastern Europe, it was also seen as an initiative of developing new understanding among the socialist parties. This conference

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- 2 In this preface, the terms “conference” and “seminar” have been used interchangeably. The major event of the Conference was an indoor seminar where a total of twenty-four working papers were presented. Discussions were held on principal issues in three groups, each consisting of seven communist parties. As there was a general curiosity on how the communists of the world would move ahead, the Conference was watched with keen interest by many people all over the world.
 - 3 As the General Secretary of the CPN (UML), Madan Bhandari led the five-member Nepalese delegation to the Conference.

was, therefore, significant for the contemporary communist movement as distinctly reflected by its timing, context, and participation.

It is now worthwhile to discuss the paper of Madan Bhandari, which reflects his thoughts as elaborated in PMD that evolved under his stewardship over several years. Interestingly, PMD was officially adopted as CPN-UML's political-ideological program only after Bhandari was re-elected⁴ as the General Secretary of the party by its Fifth General Convention. Bhandari's working paper at the Calcutta Conference, held barely after four months of the all-important fifth general convention, stands as a milestone for the interpretation of the philosophy people's multiparty democracy, only occasion he appears to have done so on an international platform.

Bhandari initiated what he definitively termed as the creative interpretation of Marxism since his early days in the CPN (ML). After making a ruthless critique of the ideological-political problems prevailing in the international communist movement,⁵ Bhandari asserted that the Nepalese communist movement should imbibe the unique realities and democratic aspirations of the Nepali people. Bhandari's working paper at the conference has re-asserted his belief and presented one

4 The Fourth National General Convention of the then CPN (ML) was held during August 25-30, 1989; the Convention elected Madan Bhandari as the party's General Secretary. It was his first tenure as the paramount leader of the party. CPN (ML) unified with another communist faction called CPN (Marxist) in 1991. This unification led to the emergence of CPN (UML) of which Bhandari was the General Secretary.

5 See the political report presented by Bhandari at the Fifth National General Convention of the CPN (UML): "Let's oppose dogmatism and liquidationism strongly; Let's apply and develop marxism creatively".

more time a solid review of the unique Nepalese experience in the face of the international communist movement.

As it was deemed imperative to seek solutions in a new way to the urgent and serious issues prevailing in the communist movement, the conference had asked four basic questions to the communist parties across the world and demanded their analytical answers based on their country's contexts. The questions were as follows⁶:

- 1) How to assess the claim of the capitalist world that socialism from the real socialist perspective no longer exists?
- 2) What were the mistakes committed in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries that provoked the anger of their citizens?
- 3) What are the accomplishments of socialism to date?
- 4) What strategy should the communist parties take to drive the socialist movement forward?

Before delving into the theme of the working paper, it makes sense to examine the existing background of these questions. The year 1990 without any doubt is a turning point for international communist movement. By the end of this year, the socialist governments that were established after the first and second World Wars in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe had gradually collapsed; the capitalist countries were given the crown as undisputed winners. In ideological terms, the year marked the historical bifurcation into liberalism and

6 For details of the Conference, see *Contemporary World Situation and Validity of Marxism: Proceedings of International Seminar of Communist Parties Marking the 175th Birth Anniversary of Karl Marx*. Calcutta: CPI (ML). Harkishan Singh Surjit. (Ed.) (1993).

socialism with the United States rising as the sole and ultimate leader of the capitalist world. In the subsequent years, the US would increasingly nourish neoliberalism and multinational crony capitalism in place of liberal democracy, which was characterized at the same time by an intensified demonization of socialist countries, a trend that continues to this day.

Ruthless Critique of the World Communist Movement

In the context of increasingly hostile global circumstances for communism and socialism, a ruthless critique of the national and international circumstances was necessary for keeping the hope of communist movement alive. The leftist parties in general and the communist parties in particular always claim to have taken the path of such assessments. However, they rarely reach conclusions through objective analysis of the circumstances by casting aside their subjective biases. In Nepal, such evaluation had been institutionally initiated by Bhandari before the Fourth General Convention of the CPN (ML)⁷. When multiparty democracy was reinstated in Nepal in 1990, changes were rapidly taking place in the political landscapes of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe that propelled a need for analyzing the international circumstances from a new academic standpoint. Francis Fukuyama, an exponent of American

7 See a review of contemporary international situation under the title "Responsibility of Party in Present Circumstances", a part of the political report presented by General Secretary Madan Bhandari at the Fifth Full Meeting of the CPN (ML) held from 24 October 1990 to 10 November 1990. Available in *Madan Bhandari: Sankalit Rachanaaharu*, published by the Madan-Ashrit Smriti Pratisthan, Part 1 (pp. 43-49). The document with the title "Let's oppose dogmatism and liquidationism strongly; Let's apply and develop Marxism creatively" has made further analysis of the international circumstances, which was presented at the 5th National Congress of CPN (UML) held from 27.01.1993 to 02.02.1993. For further study refer to: Madan Bhandari: *Sankalit Rachanaaharu* Part 1 (pp. 21-304).

neoliberalism, came first into global attention with his coinage and analysis of the phrase “End of History” to identify events leading to the removal of the governments that were claiming to have applied socialist ideology and were competing with the capitalist governments for influence⁸.

The End of History narrative projected the ideas that the post-ideological era displaced the the age of political ideology; neoliberalism that developed from the base of economic liberalism replaced the traditional liberal democracy; and the Euro-US conservatism⁹ that advocated for the further reduction

8 The book *The End of History and the Last Man* written by Francis Fukuyama, a Japanese-American political scientist, in 1992, gave an academic shape to the capitalist declaration of victory over socialism. The claim of Fukuyama that liberal democracy is the final truth of political system following the failure of socialist nations was rebuffed even by the capitalist intellectuals. However, this thesis of Fukuyama was widely used to advocate for the adoption of neoliberal economic and political system as pursued by the US government. The theme of his book is an elaboration of Fukuyama's own article published in "The National Interest" (1989) magazine, where he says: *What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government.*

Fukuyama's full article may be read at: https://www.embl.de/aboutus/science_society/discussion/discussion_2006/ref1-22june06.pdf

9 The political thought of conservatives is guided by the three main factors: reducing taxes on the multinational companies and the ultra-rich; cutting down public expenditure by reducing the government's social liability; and regulating the private sector in the national economic activities to a minimum. They believe that the capital saved from reduced taxes will be invested leading to employment creation; the budget deficit will narrow with the reduction in government expenditure. Hence, in order to encourage capital formation, the private sector should not be regulated to the extent possible. The United States is the biggest example of this exercise. Among the European conservatives, except for Margaret Thatcher, none had succeeded in reducing tax and government liability. Socially, all conservatives believe that the ideals of Christian faith have to be rigorously followed.

of states' role for public betterment prevailed. It was natural for the followers of socialist orientation to rebuff these notions, but even the capitalist academics came forward to denounce this self-aggrandizing approach¹⁰. Out of such early critics, Jacques Derrida, the Deconstruction theorist and an influential thinker, asserted that that Fukuyama's claims lacked philosophical or interpretive base and that it was nothing but a thesis lacking capability to comprehend historical occurrences¹¹.

Noam Chomsky expanded Derrida's point more forcefully. For Chomsky, it was wrong to flag unipolarity in an ideologically plural world and that an unfettered capitalism running in the disguise of neoliberalism would likely devour human civilization from its relentless exploitation of nature and human resources¹². Moving a step further, Joseph Stiglitz, the Economics Nobel Laureate of 2001, proposed the world moved towards what he says progressive capitalism for which he suggested creating new moderate capitalism by integrating more humane aspects with liberal democracy¹³.

10 Samuel Huntington, the mentor of Francis Fukuyama, wrote a book *The Clash of Civilizations and Remaking of World Order* in which he made it clear that the end of history could not be proclaimed. His explanation was that while ideological contest among states would continue side by side, the new contest would be based on religious civilization hereafter.

11 Jacques Derrida (1994). *The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*. Translated by Peggy Kamuf. London: Routledge. p. 63. In the name of a thoroughly historical account of the actual "end of history," Fukuyama has relied on "a regulating and trans-historical ideal" to organize his historical narrative. This "trans-historic and natural ideal" can only "discredit" and "suspend" the very authority of the "so-called empirical event."

12 In his famous book, *Profit Over People: Neoliberalism and Global Order* (1999), Noam Chomsky furnished an exact interpretation against the neoliberal order. More of his works may be visited at: www.chomsky.info

13 Joseph Stiglitz (2019). *People, Power and Profits: Progressive Capitalism for an Age of Discontent*. London: Penguin Random House.

After identifying socioeconomic inequalities caused by capitalism, Thomas Piketty, a French Marxist, reinterpreted the principle of distribution with a fresh concept of analyzing class. Piketty argued that the notion of reducing state's role in providing public goods lacked an adequate ideological basis¹⁴. In this way, academic studies of all ideological leanings post-1990 have proven the claim of the End of History as being defective and misleading. In application too, newer attempts of reaffirming this thesis have proven increasingly weak owing to the emergence of ugly forms of neoliberalism¹⁵.

Thus, an attempted propagation of the narrative of End of History as a new school of thought nosedived following its ideological rejection from within and without. Successive US governments, however, continued to adopt unfettered neoliberalism ever since the 1990s.

Around the period of Calcutta Conference and when Madan Bhandari was writing this paper, academic debates on the End of History had just begun. Bhandari's analysis of the debate in the paper stands out prophetic and realistic. Indeed, moving a step further from an academic debate alone, the conference made attempts for the political parties having the duty of

14 Eric Olin Wright (2018). *Class and Inequality in Picketty*. Edited by Lauren Longman & David Smith; *Twenty First Century Inequality and Capitalism: Picketty, Marx and Beyond*. Chicago, Illinois: Haymarket Books. pp. 1-38.

15 Twenty-five years after Fukuyama's thesis, the Atlantic magazine published an article "It Is Still Not the End of History" which reviews an ideological facet that opposes the myth of the end of history. This claim over the end of history, as time would tell, proved to be a bluff and delirium for the intellectuals.

This article can be reached at: <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2014/09/its-still-not-the-end-of-history-francis-fukuyama/379394/>.

implementing socialism in their respective countries came up with a political rejoinder to the discourse. The conference forged a consensus that the relevance of socialist thought had not withered; it had rather grown and that it needed to be advanced further with a strategic outlook¹⁶.

As echoed in the working papers presented by several countries, Bhandari writes in his paper:

Notwithstanding the substantial political propaganda spread against the relevance of Marxism by western capitalist countries after the collapse of socialism in the former USSR and Eastern Europe, people again increasingly realize that Marxism, a philosophy developed and founded on dialectical materialism and scientific interpretation of history, cannot die; and it shall soon reclaim popularity in feudal and capitalist societies where exploitations of various forms exist and continue. Contrary to the expectation of capitalist thinkers, political events unfolding in the independent republics established out of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe reconfirm that a temporary setback to Marxism does not necessarily make the capitalist system an alternative to socialism.

One requires a separate analysis on which type of socialists were to call authentic socialists. Several leaders at the conference,

16 The full report of the Conference is published in the *Journal of Nature, Society and Thought*, Issue 6, Year 1993, University of Minnesota Press, pp. 57-79, under the title: *Marxists Forum: International Seminar of Communist Parties Marking the 175th Birth Anniversary of Karl Marx, 5-7 May, 1993*. A panel comprising of Lenoir Bergard, Gerald Ericson, April Nuston, Harry McAlister, Edwin Marquette, Janet Kwife and Harold Schwartz all members of the Marxist Collective of Minnesota, the US, analyzed all working papers and prepared the report.

either in their papers or through their comments, critiqued varying or at times even opposing claims of socialism. They forged a consensus on assuming Marxism not as a static dogma but as a dynamic theory of evolving systems that would help make the concrete analysis of the concrete condition prevailing in a society¹⁷.

This consensus of the conference vindicated the ideological premise behind “Let’s oppose dogmatism and liquidationism strongly: Let’s apply and develop Marxism creatively” as a political thought rooted in the concrete analysis of concrete condition of Nepalese society. As various academic studies including some discussed earlier showed, the projection that the era of ideological competition between capitalism and socialism was over has proven groundless. How the communist parties should assess that projection was the primary question raised. All working papers at the conference addressed this from their own ideological standpoint. In this context, Bhandari asserted his position as follows:

Marxism being a scientific theory as it is should inform our holistic assessment of the underlying factors that were responsible for the failure of the socialist system in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. We should look for the reasons as to why there was widespread public discontent in these countries even though the income distribution was almost

17 There is a famous quote of Mao Zedong in his book "On Contradictions" published in April 1937: The most essential thing in Marxism, the living soul of Marxism, is the concrete analysis of concrete condition. More on agreements and disagreements seen in the Conference at the *Journal of Nature, Society and Thought*, Issue 6, Year 1993, University of Minnesota Press, pp. 57-79.

even and a massive social welfare program for the broad sets of social rights of the people was put in operation by the states.

The paper has not only raised questions but also provided equally emphatic answers:

In my view, certain deficiencies present in these political and economic systems fell short of guaranteeing the freedom of expression of thoughts, utilizing democratic practices, equitably mobilizing productive forces, using new technology to increase productivity by creating an environment for the development of the means of production and espousing the significance of periodically testing people's support. This naturally calls for a comprehensive reorientation for a new direction in Marxist thinking.

From the Chair of the organizing party, Harkishan Singh Surjit, the General Secretary of CPI (M), has shed further light in his paper on issues raised by People's Leader Bhandari.¹⁸

The need to address ourselves to this issue arises not only because of the renewed offensive, both ideological and political, by the enemies of human liberation imperialism and its agents. The need arises more out of the necessity to reassert the invincible validity of this creative science, rectifying the mistakes of the past, reassessing the estimations of the correlation of class forces made at various points of time, to overcome the weaknesses and lags in understanding,

18 The translation of an excerpt of the working paper presented by General Secretary Harkishan Singh Surjit. The full text of his working paper is published in the *Journal of Nature, Society and Thought*, Issue 6, Year 1993, University of Minnesota Press, pp. 57-79.

precisely to strengthen and carry forward the struggle for human emancipation.

Concerning Revisionism

Another subject the working papers discussed was the debate surrounding revisionism. From which point of time did ideological revisionism penetrate the socialist systems of the Soviet model has been persisting for a long time.

In fact, what type of ideological deviation should be named as revisionism has remained a complicated and serious theoretical issue. When Jules Basil, a French socialist journalist, in 1879, while attempting to interpret the Marxist viewpoint on private property, declared himself as a Marxist, Marx himself retorted, *'One thing is certain. If they are Marxists, then I am not.'* It was Marx's sarcasm to the erratic revisionism that could come in through an interpretation of Marxism without first understanding it in entirety. After a few years, a wiser Basil, who had then become a more ardent Marxist, got chance to coauthor and publish with Marx and Engels the documents of European socialist program¹⁹.

The discourse on revisionism gained further traction with the introduction of the term "evolutionary socialism" in 1899 by German philosopher Eduard Bernstein. Bernstein's ideological premise stood on the pedestal of Marxism. Yet, he contradicted with the dominant Marxist view of the time, which argued for establishing Socialism by revolution. Even employing coercive means would be a part of such revolution. Bernstein said a

¹⁹ Jules Bazile, known as Jules Guesde Basil, is one of luminaries of the European socialist movement. His works may be viewed in: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/guesde/index.htm>.

society could transition into socialism only through gradual evolutionary process²⁰.

In early phases, the Marxist world rejected Bernstein's views, deeming them useless. Though being a subject of continuous ideological assault, Bernstein kept naming himself a Marxist. In order for keeping away from recurring Marxist scorn, Bernstein's followers in Germany gradually replaced the term socialism with social democracy. Democratic socialism as championed by the British Fabian socialists borrows a great deal of ideas from Bernstein's.

In the context of our country, Nepali Congress as a political party professes democratic socialism with its several ideological aspects still left for interpretation. Considering NC's founding leader BP Koirala's affinities with the likes of Willy Brandt, the former socialist Chancellor of Germany, one may deduce that Koirala was influenced by the successors of Bernstein. Certain European countries including Germany have adopted what they call a social market economy with their political systems having a mix of Bernstein's theoretical premise and British parliamentarianism.

Marxist thought of twentieth century recognized Bernstein's socio-economic interpretation as a reference tool for studying Marxism. And it has also identified his revisionist deviations: first, the analysis that socialism could be established by way of constitutional or legal reforms; and second, his full rejection of the notion of dialectics. In the aftermath of the October

20 For a quick overview of the concept of evolutionary socialism by Bernstein, refer to the following text : <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/bernstein/works/1899/evsoc/index.htm>.

Revolution, Leon Trotsky was alleged of being a revisionist in the Russian Communist Party. Later, his views on the program of transitioning into socialism were vindicated as conforming with Marxism²¹. Despite having adopted communist governance decades ago, China has announced it would become a socialist nation only by 2050²². On the contrary, the Soviet Union and East European countries declared themselves as socialist states much before they could empower their people. They were on the path of revisionist deviation, which they did not acknowledge and thus came crumbling down²³.

Historical evidences demonstrate that any type of reinterpretation in ideology primarily amounts to revisionism. However, not all all type of reinterpretation leads to deviation. Let's have na example. Fundamentally, Marxism underscores the need

21 Leon Trotsky, who worked closely with Lenin during the Bolshevik Revolution was one of the members of the 7-member first Soviet Politburo. After the revolution, with the rise of Stalin, he was labelled a revisionist and traitor and mercilessly driven away from politics. Though many of the leaders were rehabilitated during the reign of Khrushchev, he was not one of them. The thoughts of Trotsky may be viewed here: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/index.htm>.

22 Robert Lawrence Kuhn. (2017). New Era on the Road to 2050. Beijing: China Daily, October 28. https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2017-10/28/content_33807725.htm.

23 The following excerpt from the working paper presented by the Vietnamese leader Dang Xuan Kiy as published in the *Journal of Nature, Society and Thought*, Issue 6, Year 1993: Dogmatism was a starting-point for the deformations and deviations of the model leading to bureaucratism and gradual shift from the communist goals. In the new situation, in the face of bitter confrontation by the anti-communist forces, and under the pressure of a small number of people holding power, bureaucratism in its turn rapidly degenerated to opportunism and betrayal leading to catastrophe for socialism.

for “forceful intervention” for the creation of proletariat rule²⁴. Looking back at history, not only the proletariat revolutions but also the freedom struggles, democratic and liberation movements everywhere in the world have succeeded only through forceful interventions directed either against domestic despots or against imperialist forces. In other words, forceful intervention is a political instrument used not only by the communists but also by the capitalist democracies. The only difference lies in the degree and nature of force in application.

To put in place the principle of “forceful intervention” enunciated by Marx, formation of communist militia under Lenin was sufficient for the Soviet October Revolution. No need for a permanent military structure was felt in the party. Moving further, Chinese national liberation movement had to fight external military forces as well as internal opponents, and the Chinese Communist Party needed an army, which helped establish a rule incorporating Marxist ideology. Hence, guerilla warfare became the mainstay of the Chinese Revolution. Marxist ideology has thus evolved in its own from Marx to Lenin to Mao and further.

When Mao Zedong in China portrayed the term ‘revisionism’ in the light akin to punishable betrayal of the ideology or to surrender the movement, it became even more unpalatable in the communist diction. In neo-Marxist discourse, Mao’s

24 Earnest Fisher. (1973). *Marx in His Own Words*. London: Penguin Random House. p. 132. "We must declare to the governments: we know that you are the armed power which is directed against the proletariat; we shall proceed against you by peaceful means where possible, and by force of arms if necessary."

revisionism is discussed the same way it was done in history over the thoughts of Bernstein or Trotsky²⁵.

Any revision leading to liquidationsim is fatal in the same manner dogmatism upholds each theory as a science. Holding a theory as a dogma forbears creativity, and has potential to deem even an absurd ideology as unchangeable. The end result of both is liquidation. Hence, Bhandari gave the title “*Let’s oppose dogmatism and liquidationism strongly: Let’s apply and develop Marxism creatively*” to his political document presented at the fifth Congress of CPN (UML).

Determining liquidationism-oriented revisionism of socialist regimes under the Soviet model has been a matter of great discord. Diverse opinions were put forth at the conference in this regard. Bhandari presented his analysis how during the era of Khrushchev and Brezhnev a deviating ideological orientation emerged from the core thought²⁶.

The Soviet socialist model became unpopular among different segments of people especially during the Khrushchev and Brezhnev era, which was characterized by the concentration of power in the hands of a few, over bureaucratization and alienation of the party from the people, suppression of dissenting views, low level of agricultural and industrial productivity, and technological backwardness.

Similar opinions were shared by nine communist parties including that of the UK, Portugal, and India. The ruling

25 A neo-Marxist interpreter Harry Powell’s book *Mao Tse-Tung: Revisionist or Revolutionary?* can be accessed at <https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/uk.ebbingtide/powell-mao.htm>.

26 *Journal of Nature, Society and Thought*, Issue 6, Year 1993, University of Minnesota Press, pp. 57-79.

communist parties of Vietnam and Cuba rejected the idea of the demise of socialism as seen from the situation of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and argued that it should be rephrased as “the demise of a model of socialism that was largely inclined towards the revisionism leading to liquidationism”.

For example, Dang Xuan Kiy, the leader of the Vietnamese Communist Party commented in his working paper²⁷:

The answer lies in the fact that this collapse had its deep roots from the erroneous understanding in theory together with its leftist dogmatism in the determining of policies, forms, measures, and steps in the process of socialist construction. The direct reason lies in the Perestroika strategy of voluntarism and the rightist opportunism which represent an ideological and political betrayal.

Kiy’s working paper further illustrated: *Though the new economic program launched by Lenin was successful in some measure to check possible deviation, it was not given continuity after Lenin.* Thus, in the view of Vietnamese leaders, liquidationism set its roots in the Soviet Union right after Lenin.

Bhandari drew attention of the conference on the omissions of Marxism while interpreting the ideological deviations found in the socialist system. His working paper calls on every Marxist to become liberal enough to assume ownership not only of Marxist ideology but also of the great human achievements, which have been a result of the shared struggles of the people of every society:

27 Ibid.

Despite Marx's acceptance of the achievements prevalent in society as the common goods of entire humankind, orthodox Marxism that was in praxis during the time refused to recognize the achievements made by the people of capitalist countries.

Such declaration that the communist parties should show courage to assume ownership of the achievements of humankind made during the development of civilization, technology and thought was a direct challenge before the orthodox and classical thought that was prevailing in the world communist movement. It was certainly a bold statements and it represents his deep and equal regard for the achievements of non-communist, patriotic movements from the French Revolution to the national liberation movements of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Not all these struggles were waged by the communists or leftists alone and as such, he, through his working paper had sought the attention of the conference in stressing the need of the communist parties to assume ownership of the civil liberties of the people endowed by each struggle.

As capitalist democracies evolved, they embodied many aspects of Marxism like social accountability, redistribution of capital, progressive taxation, reforms in land ownership, agro subsidies, etc. But the socialists converged together in deriding all aspects of capitalism²⁸. Even when a little interactive relationship was maintained with capitalism, a trend emerged to label even the friendly forces as leaning toward revisionism.

²⁸ More analysis is available in the political report adopted by the 5th Congress of the CPN (UML) which has been clarified even further by the reports of subsequent congresses.

Bhandari, while responding to queries after the submission of his working paper at the Conference, said²⁹:

Despite our countless disagreements on the exercise and experience of socialist countries, we should make friendly comments only so that we may arrive at a conclusion of what is socialism and what is not, only after validation through the examples of several exercises.

In Bhandari's view, the price paid by the citizens of capitalists and socialist countries for establishing virtues such as the openness of society, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, competitive systems, and the imperativeness of peace is of the same kind. He seems to have internalized this reality in the 1980s during his efforts to organize the Nepalese communist movement for establishing multiparty competitive democracy in the country. The Indian communist leadership has also acknowledged this fact.

Binod Mishra, the General Secretary of CPI (ML) recalls Bhandari's contribution in the following words³⁰:

Ours has been an ideal fraternal relation where we exchanged our views and experiences on various matters without ever

29 Bhandari answered the questions raised about the working paper in five points. Those points are available under the title of "Bhinnataa Bhitra Sahishnuta Ra Vividhata Bhitra Ekataa" in the Madan Bhandari: *Sankalit Rachanaaharu*, Part 1, published by the Madan-Ashrit Smriti Pratishthan, pp. 359-360.

30 Binod Mishra, in his article *The Death Heavier Than the Himalayas*, published in *Liberation*, in June 1993, paid homage to Madan Bhandari. The full text of the article discussing the contribution of Bhandari in the communist movement and his personality may be viewed here: <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mishra/1993/06/x01.htm>.

interfering in each other's affairs. Our two parties evolved more or less on the same pattern, and in some respects of mass work, their Party did precede ours.

The Road to People's Democratic Revolution

One of the prime objectives of the conference was to run a debate on how the communist parties of the world could establish socialist systems in their countries and which path they needed to adopt in the process. In the earlier analysis, it has been explained that the conference converged in reviewing the communist movement in general but it diverged in identifying points of revisions and deviations. There was no discord among the participants that different path of socialism will emerge for every society due to different circumstances specific to each nation. However, there was an animated debate on whether the socialist political system across nations could be similar or not.

Bhandari, in his working paper has briefly outlined Nepal's political movements and historic role communist parties have essayed in establishing multiparty competitive democracy. He has further stated how the CPN (UML) had assumed the ownership of the achievements resulting from those movements. Every person aware of Nepalese politics has no skepticism on the role played first by the CPN (ML) and later by the CPN (UML) for the founding and restoration of multiparty democracy³¹. Hence, to enter into a political system which is qualitatively more advanced than the multiparty system, one should not advocate for demolishing the existing competitive political framework. According to the working paper, CPN

31 Andrew Nixon (1992). *Democratization and Growth of Communism in Nepal: A Peruvian Scenario in the Making*. Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics. London: Taylor and Francis. pp. 358-386.

(UML) had pursued a policy of proving itself through competition, safeguarding human rights, and reinforcing the constitutional system as well as the rule of law to qualitatively improve that framework. Bhandari named this process 'People's Multiparty Democracy'. He says:

Based on the experiences of various socialist countries, our party has realized that a new orientation is needed while applying Marxism in countries like Nepal, and the Fifth National Congress of the party held in Kathmandu from January 27 to February 2, 1993, has made some important decisions, which I believe will have wide-ranging long-term impacts on Nepal's Leftist movement. Our party congress has adopted the program of People's Multi-Party Democracy. This decision is based on our experience of struggle of more than forty years in which the Left forces of Nepal have fought enduringly against the autocratic regime for the cause of establishing multi-party democracy. The essence of People's Multi-Party Democracy remains in that unlike the experiment made with one-party system (although some socialist countries in Eastern Europe claimed to have followed multi-party system, which in practice they did not) in socialist countries, it consents the existence and operation of various political parties and considers that a communist party should also compete in elections to have legitimate mandate from time to time to run the government and rule the country.

In general, since the people's democratic revolution will be different from the capitalist democracy, it would be erratic to understand PMD as only a program for contesting elections and forming governments.

This working paper may be better read in unison with the booklet “On people’s democratic revolution” written by Bhandari himself and the documents endorsed by the fifth National Congress of CPN (UML). In the working paper read out before the world leaders, Bhandari illuminates the difference between people’s democratic revolution and the multiparty system as understood in layman’s terms, as follows:

We believe that only a people’s multi-party democracy based on rule of law can alert us to check the mistakes and sustain the popularity of the party among people. I want to stress, however, People’s Multi-party Democracy is not the kind of multi-party system that is in practice in the world today. A most distinctive feature of the system we propose is that it is by rule anti-feudalist and anti-imperialist.

Bhandari, while presenting the people’s democratic revolution as a system paired with justice, has enumerated and explained its fourteen attributes. He could not find enough time to further enrich consolidate his ideas. However, he was successful as a young thinker to establish the thought of people’s democratic revolution in national and international arena. Now, the responsibility has come to the shoulders of the new generation to study and apply them.

Madan Bhandari’s political legacy is rich and will be long remembered. Walking into the footsteps of Pushpa Lal, who was the founding leader of the NCP, Bhandari championed the idea of joint movement with Nepali Congress for strengthening Nepal’s democratic movement. This rooted him to the ideals of his previous generation. He then advocated for the founding of republic and inclusive polity in Nepal, which prophetically

linked him to the generation after him. His ideas are under practice since the successful popular movement of 1990 and then with the promulgation of new constitution in 2015, twenty-two years after his passing.

Theoretically speaking, his politics develops a Nepalese concept of Marxism. When different communist parties of the world were using multi-party systems only as strategic tools to advance their own agenda, Bhandari led the path through innovative ways of applying Marxism with democracy.

Over time, there will be further discussions and debates on the theoretical norms of people's democratic revolution. Criticisms directed against it will make it more timeless. People's democratic revolution is an organic Nepalese thought developed by a Nepalese thinker. It is not something to be owned by the communist party alone; it is equally significant for persons having an interest in contemporary politics to research and study them. The Calcutta Paper may be held as an analysis of the international circumstances facilitating the formulation of people's democratic revolution. This paper wields even more significance as a document which presented people's multiparty democracy on an international stage.

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PAPER

Contemporary World Situation and Validity of Marxism¹

Madan Bhandari

General Secretary

Communist Party of Nepal (UML)

Dear Comrades,

After the fall of the socialist system, some important developments have taken place in the world which will have far-reaching implications on world politics. Although American imperialism has now emerged as the only superpower in the world, the events in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, growing contradiction among capitalist countries themselves, the persistence of economic recession in capitalist countries and rising discontent among oppressed and exploited people due to pro-capitalist and anti-poor policies imposed in the third world by the capitalist countries reassure us that

1 Comrade Madan Bhandari presented this paper at the International Seminar of Communist Parties on 'Contemporary World Situation and Validity of Marxism' organized by Communist Party of India (Marxist) Marking the 175th Birth Anniversary of Karl Marx held on 5-7 May 1993 in Calcutta, India. The original paper has been extracted from the 'Contemporary World Situation and Validity of Marxism: Proceedings of International Seminar of Communist Parties Marking the 175th Birth Anniversary of Karl Marx'; published by Communist Party of India (Marxist), 1993.

resurgence of Marxism is inevitable. Also, the contradiction among capitalist countries indicates that there will be a multi-polar world in immediate future especially due to the declining economic power of the USA. People are again realizing that despite too much political propaganda launched by western capitalist countries against the validity of Marxism after the collapse of the socialist system in USSR and Eastern Europe, a philosophy developed and based on dialectical materialism and the scientific interpretation of history, cannot die and it can regain the popularity within a short span of time in feudal and capitalist societies where exploitation of various forms exist and continue. The political events especially taking place in the independent republics of former the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe reconfirm that a temporary setback to Marxism cannot be a panacea to the capitalist system in contrary to the expectations of the capitalist thinkers.

The experiment with Marxist theory in different countries, however, suggests that the redefinition and reorientation of Marxism are necessary in order to guarantee its stability and reproof [prove again] that there is no alternative to the Marxism which can ensure the development of productive forces, elimination of exploitation from the societies, liberation, freedom, and progress of human being. The new experience made by some socialist countries also indicates that new thinking is needed to make it suitable and successful in the contemporary world. It should be capable enough to compete with the capitalist system and it should also be able to win the support of the majority of the people. It is a universal theory developed for the wellbeing of mankind in general and oppressed and exploited people in particular. Since its foundation is based on its class nature and the contradictions

in society, it should definitely concentrate on the development of the productive forces. But being [as it is] a scientific theory, Marxism [Marxists] should make a thorough assessment of the underlying factors responsible to make the socialist system a failure in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. We should ask ourselves that why there was so much public discontent in these countries in spite of the fact that the income distribution was almost even and a massive social welfare programme for the well-being of the people was launched vigorously by the states. In my view, there are certain defects in the thinking itself regarding the adaption [adaptation] of a political and economic system which guarantees the expression of views and use of democratic practices, proper utilization of productive forces, creation of incentive [enabling] environment to the productive forces toward the use of new technology and productivity enhancement and testing of people's support. This simply calls for a complete reorientation in the [traditional] thinking of Marxism. In the process, a Marxist has also to examine carefully the political and economic events taking place in capitalist countries to assess the inherent defects of the capitalist countries themselves. Also, it is necessary to monitor [examine] carefully how the capitalism is succeeding to resolve the economic crisis as well [as] social and political problems to a certain extent at the various phases of history and to demonstrate itself as an economically developed, industrially advanced and politically democratic system. After the fall of the socialist system in the Soviet Union, the contradiction among capitalist countries has increased further. This is partly due to the persistence of inherent weaknesses in the capitalist system which encompasses through the recession, increasing unemployment, discrimination of [among] people, the concentration of income in few hands, exploitation of working-class and competition

among capitalist countries themselves to find new markets and means of exploitation in developing countries in one form or another.

Capitalist countries are also trying vigorously to save Russia and Eastern Europe for ensuring that there is no threat to the capitalist system so that their dominance in the world could be continued. What is happening now is that capitalist countries led by America [United States] in addition to imposing capitalist system forcefully in Russia and Eastern Europe are also trying to put strong conditionalities in developing countries to adopt the market system and withdraw government support to the welfare programmes. As a result, a new monopoly [of] capitalist class is emerging fastly [in steady way] in these countries which is also trying to form a new alliance with multi-nationals and external monopoly capitalist class. Under such a given situation, I would like to elaborate my views about the validity and prospect of Marxism in today's world.

Once the Soviet Union has regressed to be a nation of hope of oppressed peoples of the world and those countries which were getting independence after a long struggle with colonial powers. This was not only because in the early 1950s, Soviet Union was able to accomplish economic advancement at a rate which was markedly higher than ever achieved by any capitalist country, [but] Such an economic advancement was also accomplished by almost even distribution of income in the society. But especially after the beginning of Khrushchev and Brezhnev era which was characterized by the concentration of power in few hands, too much bureaucratization, alienation of party from the people, suppression of dissident views, low level of agricultural and industrial productivity and technological backwardness, the

Soviet socialist model became quite unpopular among the people of different walks of life. It is true that the western propaganda accompanied by the economic dominance of USA in the world were equally responsible to defame the system to some extent. But we should not be confused that the contemporary technological development and rise in the standard of living was too fast in the west in comparison to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. We should recognize the fact that after 1930's depression, the capitalist countries learned a big lesson and realized that without the focus on social justice and welfare programmes, the growing unrest among the poor people and labour class cannot be minimized. This helped to pacify the unrest in the capitalist countries and also prevent worsening of purchasing power and living standard of *have nots* to some extent. No precautionary measures to overcome defects of the Soviet model were pursued in USSR and Eastern Europe and also no attempt was made to introduce certain elements of the capitalist system which were useful for socialist countries too. The orthodox Marxism recognizing that all the achievements of human beings in the society are the common property of the people of the world; Whatever technological progress was made in capitalist countries were not allowed to enter the [into the socialists] country. A system, as well as bureaucrats, had the privileges of enjoying the power and controlling the government machinery. Absence of democratic practices in the party and the lack of interaction between people and leaders coupled with the institutionalization of corruption led to increase the resentment among the people despite of equality in income distribution and the implementation of the social welfare programme in a big way [mass scale]. The suppression of dissident views and inability to provide the incentive to the working people at different level created a

situation in which no managers and the workers were motivated to raise productivity and enhance efficiency in the production process what was really needed was that since Marxian theory implemented in the Soviet Union was experimental in nature, in the process a continuous correction and reform in various areas was needed based on the assessment of successes and failures.

However, unlike these countries, China started reforms and open up policies from 1979. As a result, China's pace of development has now surpassed the so-called newly industrializing economies of Asia which are quite often cited by western countries as the development models for the rest of the developing countries. More than that, what we find is that the distribution pattern in China is the best among the developing countries of the world. These two opposite scenarios clearly point out that the Marxism has not failed from the world but only the Soviet model has failed.

Dear Comrades,

Let us look at what has happened in Russia after the imposition of a capitalist system in these societies. In Russia, now the rate of inflation is more than 3000 per cent. The price of Ruble which was higher than a dollar up to 1980s has gone down to as low as 800 per dollar. When the transformation process toward capitalism started, what happened is that those who were managers and also who had access to state industries were able to control and establish their right in the industries. Such anarchy to control the nation's industries, farms and resources led to make a few [people] very rich overnight with the majority of the people remaining in the miserable condition.

Yet the mounting unemployment problem accompanied by the removal of subsidy and other welfare policies and programmes in Russia to making the life of the common people extremely difficult. The growing unpopularity and rising confrontation between west backed rulers and common people in Russia has made the West too much worried. Only recently G-7 has committed to providing about 45 billion dollars to Russia to prevent the collapse of the capitalist line, the experience suggests that no benefit will be allowed by the so called capitalist transformation process. Although Yeltsin² has been successful to win the referendum as a result of massive financial support from the west, the poor response from the people and other factors indicate that the struggle of Russian people against the worse capitalist system will continue. The developments in Russia and Eastern Europe indicate that the faith in Marxism and socialism had again increased in these countries.

Yet, the growing crisis in the capitalist countries reveals that the superiority of capitalism is a temporary phenomenon. Undue emphasis is given on economic liberalization, privatization of state-owned enterprises and minimizing of government role in capitalist countries including the USA has created a situation in which there is a unique situation prevailing especially in the USA. Unemployment in USA is rising rapidly as a result of the growing recession. Also, the private sector saving is pitifully low. This is one of the reasons why the USA has become the biggest debtor in the world. This is happening at a time when the size of the trade deficit is widening in an unprecedented way. The total deficit of about 49 billion dollars with Japan in 1992/93 has

2 Boris Yeltsin, then president of Russia, has been backed up by the western forces to adopt capitalist transformation process. With Western Backing, Boris Yeltsin proposal won the public referendum held in 25 April 1993.

increased confrontation between Japan and the USA. The trade war between Europe and America is continuing in the GATT³ with no immediate solution at sight. The continuation of export and farm subsidy in Europe especially in France has been a matter of serious confrontation between Europe and America. The European integration process which has been already started is bound to widen the rift between Japan and Europe on the one hand and America and Europe on the other due to their keen competition to secure the markets. There is also divergent interests among Britain, France, and Germany on economic dominance by them in other small European countries. The crisis of the European Monetary Union especially after Pound crisis last year has not been resolved so far. It seems that the economic union established by USA, Canada and Mexico is disintegrating even before getting proper shape mainly due to economic domination by the USA and Canada over Mexico. In spite of unification of Germany, the East Germans are treated as second class citizens with rising unemployment, falling standard of living, and increasing crime there, which give signals that growing mass unrest in Germany will be inevitable. This will create an economic crisis in Germany with wide-ranging impact on Europe and America. This likely scenario clearly points out that the deeper crisis manifesting in capitalist countries will have too much negative impact on developing countries in aid, debt servicing and overall socio-economic development front, in a given situation of globalization of individual economies. This, in turn, will have a severe adverse effect on capitalist countries too. It is too early to predict the historical turn that will take place after the series of crisis

3 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) is founded in 1947 in post-world war context aiming to promote trade liberalization in the interest of western capitalist system.

cumulating over time in the world at large, it is obvious, that in such a situation Marxism will come up again in the forefront in a way to resolve crisis intensified by the capitalist system.

Along with the downfall of the socialist system in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe accompanied by the growing economic crisis in capitalist countries most notably in America and its capitalist allies are pressing developing countries to follow the capitalist economic system by introducing liberalization, privatization and so-called market-determined pricing system in their economies. Many reactionary governments of developing countries are implementing these policies and programmes without any care about the given socio-economic situation in the country. The rapid rise in prices, withdrawal of subsidies in agriculture, public utilities, and social services as well as goods necessary for common people have made the life of poor and fixed [limited] income people very difficult. The so-called Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) implemented [being] confined on economic stabilization, privatization, export promotion and price adjustment without considering in which the replacement of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) by a socialist-oriented welfare measure has been a big necessity in order to preserve the economic right of the common people, who were exploited for centuries and are now further deprived of enjoying the fruits of development even after the restoration of so called democratic rights.

Distinguished Comrades,

Since the SAP and liberalization policies have become priority areas of many governments in developing countries due to obvious reasons, I would like to present Nepalese experience

with the SAP and other so called liberalization and privatization programmes implemented recently in Nepal. The SAP in Nepal was started in 1986/87 by the previous autocratic regime. The available indices point out that in 1984/85 the total debt outstanding of Nepal was just 20.7 per cent of GDP which went up to 53 per cent in 1989/90. The inflationary pressures, the rising cost of living and mounting poverty problems accentuated in Nepal when SAP was under implementation. In 1984/85 the poverty level was about 43 per cent. This reached as high as 71 per cent in 1989-90. Thus, when the democratic movement started in Nepal, Nepal's economy was passing through many problems and major economic activities in the field of trade, industry and tourism were controlled by a small class. There was a great expectation among the common people at a time when the multi-party system was restored in the country in 1990 successfully as a result of the democratic movement launched by Left Parties and Nepali Congress jointly⁴. People were confident that the process of development benefiting directly the common people will be started soon. But the irony is that after coming to the power Nepali Congress government has not only followed the past policies and programmes, but also with the blessing of the USA and multilateral agencies, the so-called privatization, liberalization, and market-oriented system has been pursued more vigorously. As a result, there is too much rise in prices accompanied by mounting unemployment

4 Under the initiatives of Comrade Madan Bhandari and Ganeshman Singh, a joint conclave of Left Parties and Nepali Congress agreed to have peoples movement for democracy in Nepal during the beginning of 1990 that resulted to have a multiparty democratic system with constitutional monarchy and adopted a new constitution in 1991. Comrade Madan Bhandari presented a motion of 27 points reservation on the constitutional provisions, These issues were later addressed by Peoples Movement II in 2006 and new constitution in 2015.

problems and the widening gap between rich and poor people. A deliberate attempt is there to create a monopoly [of] capitalist class and makes the Nepalese economy a neo-colony of external capitalist nations. The liberalization process has got momentum especially after India implemented the structural adjustment programme. However, in spite of full support and growing Aid from western countries, the Nepali Congress government has been a complete failure in the economic front with growing frustration among the common people. The Nepalese experience is sufficient to derive the conclusion regarding the implication of west dictated policies in almost all developing countries.

The Russian and East European experience, inherent crisis in the capitalist system coupled with the growing confrontation among capitalist countries. The success of China and too much adverse effect of Structural Adjustment and other market oriented liberalization and privatization programs implemented in developing countries based on the forceful recommendations of western countries clearly indicate that there is no system, which is superior to Marxism and Socialism.

History tells us that capitalism is essentially devoted to the rich and a few privileged class, whereas Marxism is devoted to the cause of poor, exploited and oppressed people of society. Without the implementation of Marxian Ideas in the nations, no wellbeing of the majority of the people will be possible. Marxism is the only philosophy, which can guarantee the abolition of capitalist exploitation, elimination of feudal production relations, eradications of poverty, bringing about drastic changes in the society and stop the exploitation by international capitalist monopoly. But we should be very

much careful that the mistakes done in the past should not be repeated in future. For Marxism, there are problems from both ultra-leftist and revisionist forces, who are trying g to defame Marxism in one form or another. We have to understand that Marxism is a scientific theory and therefore it should not be treated as dogma. Being a scientific theory, it has to follow a creative approach so that it could fit well in the existing socio-economic situation of a nation and fulfil the basic objectives laid down in the theory.

Dear Comrades

Our party has realized based on the past experiences of various socialist countries that a new orientation is needed while implementing Marxism in countries like Nepal and therefore the Fifth Party Congress held in Kathmandu from Jan. 27 to Feb. 2 1993 has made some important decisions which I believe will have wide ranging long term impact on the left movement of Nepal. Our Party congress has adopted a programme which is based on people's multiparty democracy. This decision is also based on our struggle of last more than 40 years in which the left forces of Nepal had fought without break against autocratic regime for establishing multi-party democracy in the country. The essence of people's multi-party democracy is that unlike the experiments made with one-party system (although some socialist countries in Eastern Europe claimed that they were following multi-party system, in practice they were not) in socialist countries, it permits the existence and operation of various parties and considers that a communist party should also compete in the election and it should get the mandate from people from time to time to rule the country and run the government. We believe that only a people's multi-

party democracy based on rule of law can alert us to check the mistakes and sustain the popularity of the party among the people. I want to stress, however, that it is a people's multi-party system which is at practice in the world today. A distinct feature of this system is that it wants to establish a multi-party system which by rule, is anti-feudalist and anti-imperialist. The main features of the party programme adopted by the congress are as follows:

1. Supremacy of law [Constitution]
2. Pluralistic open society
3. Separation of power
4. Protection of human rights
5. Multi-party competitive system
6. Periodic election
7. Government of majority holding party and the constitutional opposition
8. Rule of law
9. Strengthening people's democratic system
10. Permission to foreign capital
11. Compensation to those landlords who support people's democracy
12. Balanced and dignified foreign policy with the highest priority on national interest
13. The leadership of the working class and people's democratic dictatorship [governance] or people's democratic state
14. Anti-feudal, anti-comprador capitalist, and anti-imperialist People's multi-party democracy.

We have realized that without permitting people to express their views freely, providing an opportunity for constructive

criticism, and promoting a competitive system in society, it will be difficult to create an incentive [enabling] environment to the people and it will be similar mistakes as were done in USSR and Eastern Europe. It is our firm belief that all types of opposition are not destructive. We are, however, aware of the likely adverse effect of the competitive system, especially on the distributional pattern and therefore we have envisaged such an economic programme which ensures the development of productive forces and no polarization and exploitation exists in the society. Our economic programme provides a leading role to the state. At the same time, it allows the private sector to play an important role in the economy particularly through expanding its activities in the areas like trade and industry.

In spite of a new thinking taking place in various parts of the world about socialism, a long struggle with capitalism is inevitable. Being a single superpower in the world today but threatened by rivalry from other capitalist countries, American imperialism is not only trying to promote and strengthen capitalist system in Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and developing countries through whatever means, it is also equally trying to destroy the socialist system of Cuba, North Korea, Vietnam and even China. As a result of American imperialist imposing economic blockade in Cuba, Cuban people are facing too much economic hardship today. It is also creating various hurdles to North Korea and is creating problems toward the unification of two Koreas. On the other hand, there is no international communist organization as such which can protect the socialist countries and serve the interest of communist parties of the world. Such an organization is not only a distant possibility but also past experiences suggests that even if it exists it may not be that much relevant and

useful in the present world context. Therefore, international seminars, regional gatherings, the formal link among parties and frequent contact among the people might be the best way to exchange views, disseminate ideas, assist each other, and strengthen the communist movement. The Communist Parties in Europe and Latin America have given a new impetus to the communist movement. I hope that this seminar organized by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) will also add a new dimension in the history of the communist movement.

Dear Comrades,

Before I conclude, I want to repeat based on my assessment of recent political and economic events that the setback to Marxism is a temporary phenomenon and socialist philosophy developed by examining the class nature and historical developments definitely will regain popularity in the immediate future. It is a universal theory and therefore it will remain a guiding principle of oppressed and exploited people of the world. Today, the main responsibility of a Marxists is to convey the message to the people that so long as *haves and have nots* exist in the society the validity of Marxism will remain in this earth.



REMARKS AT THE DISCUSSION

Response to the Discussions and Interventions

Dear Comrades,

Having heard the views and experience of all the delegates, I have found many common points of understanding each of us is reaching. We should probe the past where many mistakes were made. But to point only black [dark side] about the past will not be doing justice to the past. But to keep a blind eye on past mistakes will not work. Many important achievements were made in the social arena due to the application of Marxism. I would like to point out especially 5 points:

- 1) Apply Marxism creatively according to one's concrete conditions [Specific Social, economic, historical and cultural context of a nation]. So, to take Marxism as dogma will not allow us to progress. So, Marxism as a living science is capable enough to face all the ups and downs during its advance.
- 2) We should have a sense of respect and tolerance for the separate experiences and views. What is correct and what is wrong cannot be decided only by comparing what is written in the books.

- 3) We should have a responsibility for defending the socialist countries, China, Korea, Cuba and Vietnam are the rays of hope of all revolutionary people of the world. So whatever reservation we may have regarding their experiments and experiences, we should have friendly comments only, so that only after evaluating several practices, we can come to certain conclusions that this is socialism and this is not.
- 4) How the communist and workers party can be the advance force and vanguard of its people's interest? How can the vast majority of people take the communists, Marxists as the defender of their class and national interest? I think, only on the basis of its performance of attracting thousands and thousands of people and having high prestige in its own country, and the party can be said to be adapting to its own society.
- 5) We should agree that we have to enrich Marxism only through the practice of thousands of people. Only by regular sharing among the Communist Parties of different countries can we be benefited. We have come from different backgrounds and with a different experience. So, such type of seminars is much fruitful.

In the past, we [have] looked for models and uniformity either in the period of social-political change or in the period of socialist construction. So, there were many deviations and mistakes due to this. After learning many lessons, we should now come to a conclusion that there should [be] a tolerance while there are differences and search unity in diversity.

Lastly, I would like to thank the leadership of CPI (M) for organizing such a type of seminar and providing a forum to exchange views and experiences. I think we should agree on convening such type of seminar at other times [too].

Participating Organizations

- 1 Communist Party, Cuba
- 2 Workers Party, Korea
- 3 Communist Party, Vietnam
- 4 Socialist Party, Australia
- 5 Workers Party, Bangladesh
- 6 Workers Party, Belgium
- 7 Communist Party, Brazil
- 8 Communist Party, Britain
- 9 New Communist Party, Britain
- 10 Communist Party, Canada
- 11 Communist Party, France
- 12 German Communist Party
- 13 Communist Party, Greece
- 14 Communist Party, India
- 15 Popular Socialist Party, Mexico
- 16 Nepal Pommunist Party (UML)
- 17 Communist Party, Philippines
- 18 Portuguese Communist Party
- 19 South African Communist Party
- 20 Workers Party, Turkey
- 21 Todeh Party, Iran
- 22 Syrian Communist Party
- 23 Communist Party, U.S.A.
- 24 Bharatiya Communist Party, (Mawabadhi)